

trying to remember  
something  
i forgot

+

An indefinite request  
for installation proposals  
RR haiku 011

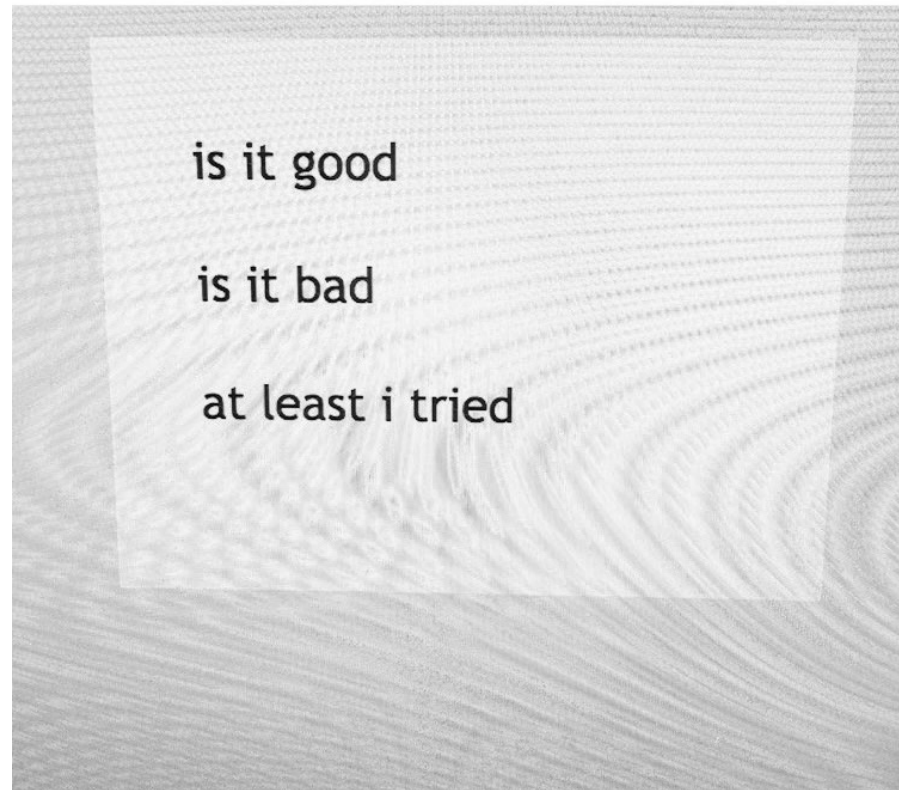
trying to remember  
something  
i forgot

Five essays commissioned on the occasion of  
at least i tried  
An installation by Rafaël Rozendaal  
The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

Kayla Anderson  
Haley Berkman  
Margaret Carrigan  
Marvin Jordan  
Forrest Nash

 newrafael

2h



♥ 109 likes

newrafael [www.atleastitried.org](http://www.atleastitried.org) is a website with 5 essays about my haiku. Thanks to all the writers and @thestolbun

## writing down whatever comes to mind: thoughts on *at least i tried* by Rafaël Rozendaal

kayla anderson

I'm writing this after having been awake for 36 hours: having worked for 18 at my desk job, divided 12 between making art, looking at other people's art, eating, and washing everything in my suitcase in order to pack it up again, and finally having danced for 6 of them straight. By the time I finish this, I'll be on hour 44.

I'm typing this into the screen of my iPhone 4s on the train, using an app that mimics some sort of antiquated textured paper. It doesn't at all resemble the type of paper I have in my notebook. I realize that I have my notebook on me, but for some reason my phone seems more appropriate for the drafting of this essay.

I can see Rafaël Rozendaal's haiku being placed where the ads are in the train cars. I don't ride the train much anymore, but when I do I like to just stare off in the direction of the ads. Most of the time the ads I see are for low-income housing or depression; recycling or free meals; the removal of varicose veins; burlesque clubs that specialize in performances themed around videogames from the 90s.

I'm writing this in my head as I walk home. I'm trying to smile at people and dogs without looking directly in their faces.

I'm writing this in my bed with all the sheets piled on top of the mattress. I plan to write this on the plane to LA tomorrow, but instead I'll end up sleeping.

I'm writing things that I probably shouldn't allow to be published. But I want to be honest, and so, what else is there to write? This is what Rozendaal's haiku seem to ask for: an unpolished collection of thoughts and reactions, brutal honesty at the risk of saying something and nothing at the same time.

Last week at an artist residency I had a two-hour long conversation about irony and sincerity in the art world, and about the questions that those of us who enter it from working class families constantly nag ourselves with.

For a long time the trend towards insincerity in art used to bother me, and I could never exactly say why. Now I realize that it irked me because only certain people can afford this kind of insincerity. If you are spending money to make art when you should be sending money home to your family, you are doing something so absurd that you can't risk not being utterly sincere about it.

Despite what others may think, something about Rozendaal's haiku leads me to interpret them as sincere. They read as direct expressions, perhaps because the syllable count has been abandoned. I've always thought that the people who really mean what they say are the ones who just say it, regardless of whether or not it sounds pretty. This is why I think Joan Baez makes folk songs sound terrible; the recordings focus more on her voice than the lyrics.

---

The first time I saw Rafaël Rozendaal speak was in 2011 at the Nightingale Theater in Chicago. Watching something at the Nightingale sort of feels like watching something in someone else's living room, because technically you are. I knew about his work because at the time part of my job was to read Rhizome and post links to web art on a blogging site with an outdated interface. When I inherited the task, for some reason there were no links to Rozendaal's websites on the blog.

Maybe because of the hyper-saturated color of some of his work at the time, or because the crowd of my peers that I knew I would see at the talk were exceptionally rich, glam, and fashionably ironic, I expected him to be a little more flashy than he was. I was surprised to see a fairly friendly looking guy in a white shirt and jeans that spoke about his work in what seemed like a very sincere way, and who wanted to go out to eat with a bunch of strangers afterwards.

At the time I had an ex-boyfriend named Rafaël who was also familiar with Rozendaal's work. After we broke up he moved back to Santa Barbara, California. At one point he started talking to Petra Cortright on the internet because she also lived in Santa Barbara. It's a small place. He liked to tell me about it because he and Rafaël Rozendaal had the same first name. He also used to wear white t-shirts with the sleeves rolled up and jeans. They even had the same hairstyle. I didn't go out to dinner with everyone after because knowing this made me feel like a spy.

Little things like that can remind you that artists are people too. This is something even artists forget about other artists. I was at a conference recently where after a room full of people introduced themselves with phrases like "I'm an artist," "I'm a curator," and "I'm a computer programmer," one high school student stood up and said, "I'm a person."

I feel similarly about the haiku as I read them off my screen to the artist/musician/person from Austria whom I've been sharing this residency with. Several of them sum up conversations we've had over the last few days, such as RR haiku 075 and RR haiku 074,

**america  
even though it sucks  
it's awesome**

**would you create  
something amazing for us  
we have no budget**

A friend is visiting me who I haven't seen in over a year and I receive a text from her that reads like RR haiku 066,

**take it easy  
breathe in  
breathe out**

---

I'm writing this now in a former thrift store. I've been told that my bedroom, which is just large enough to fit a twin size bed, is actually not a bedroom at all, but a 24-hour access studio. I assume this means that I have to make art in my bed while I am here, and so, I am in bed on my laptop, not making art, but writing about it. Or around it really.

I'm here because I am pseudo residency hopping, meaning that I am

coming back home to work 5 days in between each new residency, because unlike some people, I think I could become homeless. It's exhausting. But it also feels luxurious, like pretending to be rich. Except that rich people would never do this. They would never spend weeks at a time living with a bunch of strangers three to a room, on small beds that aren't their own. It makes the airport feel like the pinnacle of privacy and concentration, and a 5-hour flight the best place to sleep. I spent 4 hours in the Piedmont Triad airport today just to write.

What I'm trying to say is that artist residencies, like attending art schools, are all about trying. It's an extension of effort towards some point, even if no one really knows what that point is. When I decided to leave home and go to an art school whose annual tuition amounted to far more than my family income I told my mother it was all to avoid "social stagnation." I don't know where I got the phrase from, but I just repeated it over and over. It goes back to the concept—or rather the reality—of art as a strange form of class hopping. You don't know what you are doing, or why you are doing it; you just know that you want to make your life different than it is. You want to try.

I think of the art students who will be living with these haiku for the coming months. Specifically I think about them staring at RR haiku 011,

**is it good**  
**is it bad**  
**at least i tried**

Not just staring at it, but sleeping in front of it. The hallway that the haiku will be installed in is a strange place because it is public to the school community but often co-opted by students for otherwise private activities. I've met so many students over the years that refer to it as their "secret spot." I see students taking power naps on the grubby sofa, their cellphones in their hands, arms flung out waiting for the alarm to go off. I see students eating, crying, cramming text into their brains or into their laptops, having group meetings, and sometimes make-out sessions. This all happens in a well-lit, visible space. Somehow they've blocked out the fact that they are always on display. They are so focused on trying. Trying to get through the 2-5 year situation they've put themselves in. The same situation that will lead to a lifestyle of just trying at the expense of sleeping, eating, begin alone, being around others. They can't stop to ask themselves if the life they have chosen is good or bad, because if they do, it might all fall apart.

It reminds me of a few conversations I've had with people in response to the December 2014 article that came out in the New Yorker subtitled "Hans Ulrich Obrist, the Curator Who Never Sleeps." There is an art world trend (and, as some vodka ads I've seen on the train suggest, a business world trend) towards the glorification of not sleeping. I meet a lot of art students who claim they don't sleep. This has come to be considered an honorable and at times expected lifestyle for artists and curators. It corresponds with RR haiku 111,

**never working**  
**never not**  
**working**

This is why Hans Ulrich Obrist and some of the students I meet at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago who will soon be living with these haiku can take pride in the claim that they don't sleep. They have dissolved any distinction between work and not work. It's a concept that feeds into hyper-capitalism really well: the drive to always be working, to always be 'productive.' Some of us have what we call work and work-work. Or work-work and art-work. Or work and werk/werq. So for many of us the equivalent would read "always working/never not werqing."

Unless you come from a family that makes or looks at art, either of these lifestyles will lead to the confusion of your parents and siblings thinking that you are perpetually in school when you say things like "I just got off work but I have to write this essay/proposal/statement." or "I'm taking off work to install this exhibition/participate in this festival/talk at this symposium." They won't understand why you are doing these things that seem like work when you are not at work. Because artists are a species of people who are working all the time, unless you come from a wealthy family that funds your art practice. In this scenario they will understand the concept of not working, and since art is your only job, you might actually have days off.

---

My mother was always working and so I grew up in an office building, along with my siblings, a few friends who also came from single parents and needed a place to be at night, and the children of the people who cleaned the building while my mother worked late into the evening. This was the type of office building with maze-like hallways filled with cubicles upholstered in scratchy grey or beige fabric, and there were several of them over the years. One thing I remember is running back

and forth through the hallways as fast as possible in my socks. Another thing I remember is playing with the copy-paper.

The colors of the haiku paintings look like the colored copy-paper in most offices. They speak of a sort of playfulness that is controlled, corporate or regulated. They are meant to ‘spice things up’ without irritating anyone’s palate. I saw a lot of these colors when working in the Hans Ulrich Obrist archive; they pop up in some versions of the instruction-based project *do it* and also in the work of the artist Amalia Pica. The exhibition catalog for Pica’s solo show at the MCA is filled with pages in these exact 5 colors. It is meant to look like a composition book, and many of the essays are accompanied by charts and graphs. In Pica’s work this seems to hint at the elementary and at shared formalized experiences. In Rozendaal’s work it makes me imagine the haiku being typed up in an office cubicle. A lot of the haiku describe long periods of staring at screens, wanting money, going to the bathroom, longing for vacations, feeling the need to exert effort in some way, wanting to come out ahead of others, fluctuations between boredom and stress. They could easily describe working a desk job and being a digital artist at the same time. Maybe one thing they show is that people who are artists and people who are not artists aren’t really that different. Both spend a large portion of their time staring at screens in exchange for money, excreting, and thinking about the beach.

## the in-betweenness

haley berkman

In their utter simplicity and clarity, Rafaël Rozendaal’s haiku stand for the current moment. The five chosen for exhibition, with the same lowercase font (obviously Rozendaal couldn’t be bothered to capitalize the letters) and sickly sweet pastel backdrops, I laughed.

Perhaps it’s because The Weeknd’s newest album glorifying the detached and morose is blaring or that a recent *New York Times Magazine* is open to an article chronicling how the Internet affects artistic production, but Rozendaal’s work is absolutely on point. Our generation wants everything quick, easy, and gleaming. When we don’t have that, we give up. We want to put in the least amount of time and effort for the biggest payoff, whether that’s with work, relationships, etc. Being overtly interested or passionate about something is viewed as a downfall—apathy is valued above all else.

These works, in their installation at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago, will both envelop the viewer due to their expansive size but also be easily digestible. The flattened expanse of one, soft color with only three lines of text—the longest haiku is 10 words—is quick to take in. The viewer can also literally walk past the works: they are on view in a hallway. Since they are located in a site of passage, people will move past them, at times consciously experiencing them and sometimes not. But these works will stick with the viewer, gnawing away long after leaving the installation. It’s the immediacy of the works but it’s also the space they inhabit, which Rozendaal calls “the space between Almost Nothing and Hardly Anything.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Rafaël Rozendaal, “Things and Pictures of Things,” <http://www.newrafael.com/texts/>.

These works can exist in multiple formats—as the wall paintings, in photographs documenting the installation, and in the instructions and certificate of authenticity that accompany the work. The works can be painted on a wall by anyone, as long as they follow the artist’s instructions. An art historical lineage of wall paintings—think Sol LeWitt or Lawrence Weiner—supports the view that if this work is executed without these documents, it is an unauthorized version and thus a copy. With work like Rozendaal’s, which exists in formats beyond that of traditional wall paintings, we can begin to open up these parameters and question their uniqueness.

The haiku have another life beyond that of the wall paintings. They exist in a book of *almost* one hundred haiku (again, he couldn’t be bothered to make a few more), on a dedicated section of Rozendaal’s website, and on social media—Instagram, Twitter, even the almost passé Facebook. These works are seemingly made for social media—they are endlessly clickable, flippable, and scrollable, rife with likes and favorites. The haiku are so relatable, so precise in their inaction that it is easy for social media users to, with very little effort, double tap and re-post.

What is fascinating about this phenomenon of the apathetic is that, at our core, we aren’t apathetic. We almost work harder to *appear* that we are. It’s that “undone yet done” look: the outfit that seems effortless but was actually deliberately chosen or the Instagram presence complete with thousands of followers that you act nonchalant about but in reality is carefully curated. To promote his work, Rozendaal runs every social media outlet that is acceptable and even has a separate Twitter account where he documents, in real time, every bite of food he has eaten since 2008. All of Rozendaal’s pages have taken consistent time and effort to maintain but it doesn’t *appear* that way. Rozendaal’s food Twitter is simple, that outfit is casual, and that Instagram presence is understated.

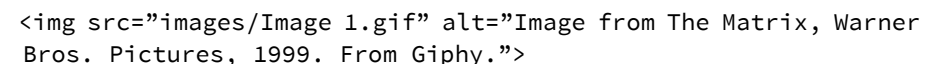
So where does that leave us?

Stuck in the in-between. And it’s the in-betweenness of Rozendaal’s works that truly stands out—the variety of presentations the works can take, the location of their installation at SAIC, and most of all, the language of the haiku. It’s as if the speaker is caught, about to produce something, and then stops. It’s all too much. And it’s this apathy that is emblematic of our generation.

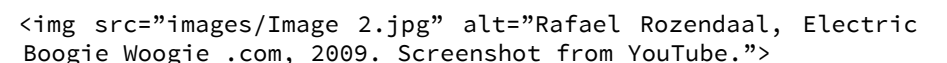
## IRL: Rafael Rozendaal’s *at least i tried* at The School of the Art Institute of Chicago

margaret carrigan

We’re all worried about what the Internet will do to us now that we need it for everything from driving directions to dating. There’s an [NPR podcast](#) entirely devoted to concerns over digital technology’s interference with our health, our minds, our lives. (If only you didn’t need the Internet to listen to a podcast.) We act like the World Wide Web is some kind of [uninvited guest](#) who just won’t leave or, even worse, a [tyrannical colonizer rendering us all slaves](#). We forget that we make the Internet; it’s not the Internet that makes us.

A small, square image showing a scene from The Matrix, likely the iconic "bullet time" sequence. The image is a still from a GIF, showing a character in a white coat in a dark, industrial setting.

Rafaël Rozendaal hasn’t forgotten, though. If you Google him, you’ll get [135,000 results](#) almost proclaiming him the artist king of Internet. He’s best known for his single-page website “paintings” that now sell for thousands at auction. Perhaps this is why his haiku works, like the ones on view in *at least i tried*, are so frustrating—a few words typed up in Trebuchet with directions on how to paint them on a wall, what the hell does this have to do with the Internet besides its [web-friendly font](#)?

A screenshot of a YouTube video showing a painting by Rafael Rozendaal. The painting is a simple, abstract composition with a grid-like pattern of small squares. The background is dark, and the grid is composed of light-colored lines.

I guess we can consider the haiku an inversion of his earlier website works wherein the artist likens a screen to a painting (instead of likening a painted wall to a screen as is the case here). But this might be too simple of an answer for a man that purportedly has the word “Internet” tattooed on his inner lip. What is it about this [archaic form](#)

of [Japanese poetry](#) that Rozendaal finds useful for—or even congruent to—his web-centric practice? Traditionally, these short poems of just seventeen syllables were reflective, momentary musings that nodded toward nature. Is not the [plight of the new millennium](#) our inability to reflect on the world’s natural wonders since we see everything through a screen now?



Our screens aren’t our masters, as Rozendaal reminds us through some of his other works. We can [click them](#), [change them](#), [close them](#), or even [shut them off](#). What we can’t turn off as easily is our desire for them, to be [lost in a black mirror](#), to revel in the unexpected as we scroll through our [Facebook feeds](#). Many of the haiku on view in the exhibition express this need to be stimulated or awed,

almost nothing  
hardly anything  
barely something

or the sublime pleasure of feeling overwhelmed

never working  
never  
not working

These are not new yearnings, as the timeworn practice of haiku proves.



The only thing that is new here is the landscape we find ourselves in. We still seek the transcendence of a wild vastness; where once we ventured afar or even just stepped outside, we now click around [Reddit’s “rising” page](#). Instead of enjoying it, we berate ourselves for not being present enough. We fail to see we’re missing the online moments we so desperately crave. Rozendaal brings them to us in real life through the literary equivalent of an [Instagram photo](#)—his haiku. And, unlike us, he doesn’t levy moral or medical judgments on our desire to connect to something larger, he merely asks “is it good/is it bad…”



## Rafaël Rozendaal: Spontaneity Engine Optimization

marvin jordan

*Hunting for domain names is a very specific and difficult game, since most of them are taken.—Rafaël Rozendaal*

A primary characteristic of the haiku is its resourcefulness: the economy of language, the editorial efficiency, and, above all, its simplicity. To be resourceful as an internet artist is something of a tautology, a trait that resembles more of a genetic disposition rather than an aesthetic style. In the case of Rafaël Rozendaal, the restless ability to detect the finitude of his terrain—to plot the cartographic limits of artistic domain names—is a precondition to his haiku practice. By rethinking and updating the haiku form in a context parallel to that of internet art, Rozendaal shows us how, like offline sighs of relaxation, ripples of meditation are today more necessary than ever.

In direct contrast to the infinitely interconnected calculations embedded in SEOs, one might consider Rozendaal’s haiku as anti-search results. As if designed to trigger algorithms of spontaneity, the haiku reads like three lines of code, a program with no beginning or end, but which nonetheless elicits a command in the mind of the reader.

RR haiku 166,

trying not to  
end up  
having to

This compositional process suggests that offline life—far from being immune from or incompatible with online behavior—has a user



experience of its own. As a poetics of nature, the logic of the haiku operates on the basis of a different SEO, a pattern of “spontaneity engine optimization” which Rozendaal captures in fleeting moments of whimsy, RR haiku 131,

**spring sun  
summer breeze  
winter mood**

But what would any of this be without humor? In a field increasingly characterized by participants that take themselves too seriously, the role of haiku in the context of contemporary art provides a much needed breath of fresh air. As digital technologies infiltrate our culture and the power of metrics gains ground over arts institutions (such as MFA programs), Rozendaal offers a tongue-in-cheek reflection, RR haiku 011,

**is it good  
is it bad  
at least i tried**

It’s no accident, then, that the haiku’s function in its (post-)modern context coincides with its most ancient characteristic: an evocation of nature. The main difference today resides in its transposability of form: will it be published as a book, printed on canvas, or projected onto a screen? As technology accelerates, art markets inflate, and domain names are bought and sold, Rozendaal’s haiku address the world in both content and form. One can read them as intermissions from digital fatigue, or consistent pieces in an expanding URL puzzle.

## Untitled

**forrest nash**

Bashō, the most famous practitioner of the haiku form, nearly always chose to employ images from nature or daily life. These images, either in mood or by metaphor, generally reinforce philosophical principles. This work, using the sound of a bird, reflects on the differences between reality and experience, and the role of that distinction in our inner life,

**In Kyoto,  
hearing the cuckoo,  
I long for Kyoto.**

Similarly, Bashō used a stark scene to describe the importance of expectations and context in our relationship to the world,

**Even a horse  
arrests my eyes—on this  
snowy morrow**

Here, concrete images are doors into wide areas of philosophical thinking. Each image, which can be seen and felt vividly, invites questions which then invite discourses or long avenues of private thinking.

In a quintet of haiku installed in Chicago, Rafaël Rozendaal refuses perceptual life altogether, enforcing an entirely rhetorical universe where words half-heartedly attempting to relate to each other, as if struggling together to find a cliché but ultimately giving up the search. This work, for example, listlessly qualifies vague nouns as they circle around the space where a referent should go,

**almost nothing**  
**hardly anything**  
**barely something**

Again, they make a show of empty, placeless pathos,

**not here**  
**not there**  
**somewhere**

The closest Rozendaal gets to a narrative still takes place entirely within the mind, and similarly uses “thing” to drain away any color or specificity, “something” not necessarily the object of his effort to remember, but rather a mumbled, flustered utterance, as if ellipses were inserted before and after each line, ending in frowning resignation

**trying to remember**  
**something**  
**i forgot**

The words are like actors shuffling around on a dark stage, colorless and silent, evoking only confusion or apathy, less doors than walls. Instead of concrete images unfolding into abstract ideas, these are abstractions that fold up into a mood or an affect we might recognize in daily life, a subtle, blithe disengagement that inevitably speaks to the dull feeling of life in front of the screen. Appropriately, images of nature and moments of reflection are replaced by quick, empty bits of speech. Like so much internet-focused contemporary art, Rozendaal’s writing mostly gestures toward capturing contemporary existence as a feeling. In place of the searching, melancholy repose of someone like Bashō, Rozendaal’s affective range is from mild bemusement to mild anxiety, all resulting in paralysis by equivocation,

**never working**  
**never**  
**not working**

As writing, Rozendaal’s poems begin to gain specificity only when considered in relation to their writer, as exposition for Rozendaal the character rather than as expressions themselves. From this angle, the final work transforms from a neutral shrug of the shoulders into a confession of insecurity,

**is it good**  
**is it bad**  
**at least i tried**

Ironically, the reliable colorlessness and emptiness of these works makes it clear that they were authored by a human. Compare this to the character of Michaela McCann’s twitter identity “are u a BOT,” in which a script scrapes human utterances and attempts to put them into short, sensical statements, limited by character count instead of syllable count because they are posted automatically to Twitter. Just like Rozendaal’s, the bot’s poems are concrete as language, rather than as image, and likewise are most interesting as part of a metanarrative in which their author is a character. The form, [person] are u a [noun] because u r [description of noun], generates humorously confident declarations. You can feel the bot, like a child, proudly demonstrating its knowledge, most of the time not realizing that it has failed to actually know. The bot’s lines replace Rozendaal’s carefully crafted emptiness with accidental, koan-like absurdity, sometimes to beautiful effect,

**boy are u a Sprite because u r and talk about**

Or

**boy are u a XYZZY because u r in a room filled with debris washed in from the surface**

Or

**girl are u a how are you gentlemen because u r after setting them up the bomb**

Other times, the bot sets up an expectation and resists it, as in this typical couplet, where instead of explanation we are given an echo,

**girl are u a pushing daisies because u r pushing plants up from the ground**

Occasionally, the bot defies our expectations by actually meeting the expectation it was trying to set up, miraculously saying something kind of sensical,

**androgynous are u a bluetooth douche because u r always talking three octaves too loud and annoying others around them**

The bot can be philosophical,

**boy are u a Purgatory because u r thought to be physical**

Or reflect images of daily life,

**girl are u a These pretzels are making me thirsty because u r making me thirsty!!!**

But they can also embody the vague, empty, tautology of Rozendaal's haiku,

**girl are u a incoherent because u r incoherent**

Or

**boy are u a prototype because u r the prototype**

Or even his works' flashes of self-awareness,

**girl are u a Haiku  
because u r yummy and filling Five more syllables**

By invoking his own state of “never working” and yet “never not working,” Rozendaal gives us a picture of himself as a kind of bot, a script with no real ownership over its own byproducts, the dumb mouth of a god he can't understand. It is Rozendaal, the author, as an image, which starts to open a door for philosophical thinking. This not-not-working state looks like sitting at a computer and typing out “never working/never/not working,” or it looks like negotiating with a school's bureaucracy to pay workers to paint “never working/never/not working” on the wall. A collector tentatively wondering if he bought the right one, the right one being “is it good/is it bad/at least i tried” is an image, and it can begin to ask questions in the way that longing for Kyoto while being inside the city does. That he has strangled the bird into silence, eliminating nature and color from his haiku, means that these are all five winter poems, more than a year of seasons passed in the arctic, alone, on a boat, with no horses anywhere.

**another year is gone  
a traveler's shade on my head,  
straw sandals at my feet**



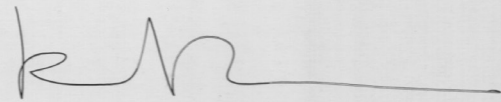
**The Stolbun Collection  
Announces**

**An indefinite request  
for installation proposals  
RR haiku 011**

**A. Will Brown**

RR HAIKU 011

IS IT GOOD  
IS IT BAD  
AT LEAST I TRIED



## Exhibition as Object—Object as Exhibition

a. will brown

Nothing lasts forever. What about a contemporary art exhibition? There are many artworks and exhibitions that conflate duration and space, as well as those that blend display, repetition, and concept. A few notable examples include Hans Ulrich Obrist's *do it*, Andrea Fraser's *Museum Highlights*, Tom Marioni's *Drinking Beer With Friends is The Highest Form of Art*, Sol Lewitt's wall drawings, Petra Cortright's YouTube based video works, Jens Hoffmann's *Americana*, and the many sets of reproducible Fluxus instructions and scores. While the presentation of challenging exhibitions and artworks is nothing new in the history of art, the environment for such projects continues to shift. Some of the more radical and ephemeral changes of late include online based exhibitions and artworks, a landscape of challenging performances, and an array of self-published books and typographical projects. What do these changes imply about the future of exhibitions? Is it possible to have a contemporary art exhibition that never ends? What would it mean to show one artwork that is simultaneously both object and exhibition—exhibition and object?

What kind of artwork, artist, and network would make this possible? Imagine one poetically, even impossibly simple, yet conceptually rigorous piece—installed across various forms, with uncomplicated rules for display—exhibited forever.

Rafaël Rozendaal has made such a work, in fact, a series of them, they are haiku. Much of Rozendaal's oeuvre, including his ongoing series of websites and a curatorial project called *Bring Your Own Beamer (BYOB)*, blend artwork and exhibition through continual display,

instructions and participation. His catalogue of websites operate as users click the mouse and initiate the software to execute one or more simple repetitive functions. These functions often involve morphing geometric shapes and vibrant blocks of color that swirl and move rhythmically. Further, his website works are always on display, and get millions of unique views each year. **BYOB** is an open platform for one night gatherings that asks participants to bring their own projectors to screen videos, films, and gifs. **BYOB** can take place anywhere around the world, and **Rozendaal** keeps track of where and when they occur. The relationship between **Rozendaal's** work and that of conceptual pioneers like **Sol LeWitt** and **Lawrence Weiner** is striking. However **Rozendaal's** conceptual project—including a seemingly endless series of interactive websites, a shifting set of open platforms, mirror and projection based exhibitions, and simple yet rigorous certificate based works—uniquely addresses the present paradigm.

**Rozendaal's** haiku works each offer a few rules for those who collect and exhibit them. In the case of the specific work *RR haiku 011* “is it good/ is it bad/at least i tried”, which is owned by **The Stolbun Collection**, the certificate of authenticity reads: choose a wall; paint two equal pink rectangles (slightly apart); apply text on top of right rectangle; text color = black; font = **trebuchet ms**; paint color. The final stipulation is that each haiku can only exist in one place at a time as a unique object for the duration of that exhibition.

In the fall of 2015 five essays inspired by **Rozendaal's** haiku were published online ([atlestitried.org](http://atlestitried.org)) to coincide with the exhibition *at least i tried* at **The School of the Art Institute of Chicago**. The exhibition and web project were organized by **Seth Stolbun**, founder of **The Stolbun Collection LLC**.

**The Stolbun Collection LLC is pleased to announce a request for proposals to exhibit its RR haiku 011,**

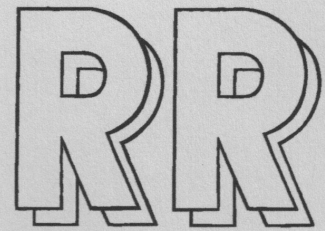
is it good  
is it bad  
at least i tried

**The call for proposals is open to anyone, anywhere, and across any space as long as the work is shown in a setting that is frequented by more than one person, is shown for a specific duration, and is treated as a unique object that conforms to **Rozendaal's** specifications. The work can be shown individually, with artworks by other artists, or with non-art objects and ephemeral materials. Proposals will be accepted in any form.**

**The intention of this open call is for *RR haiku 011* to be shown continuously and indefinitely at varying locations in order to challenge traditional notions of art and exhibition making. This project is an ongoing collaboration between **Seth Stolbun**, **Rafaël Rozendaal**, **A. Will Brown**, and the various institutions, individuals, and spaces that will show the work.**

**Please submit all proposals to [seth@stolbun.org](mailto:seth@stolbun.org)**





certificate of authenticity

-----  
is it good

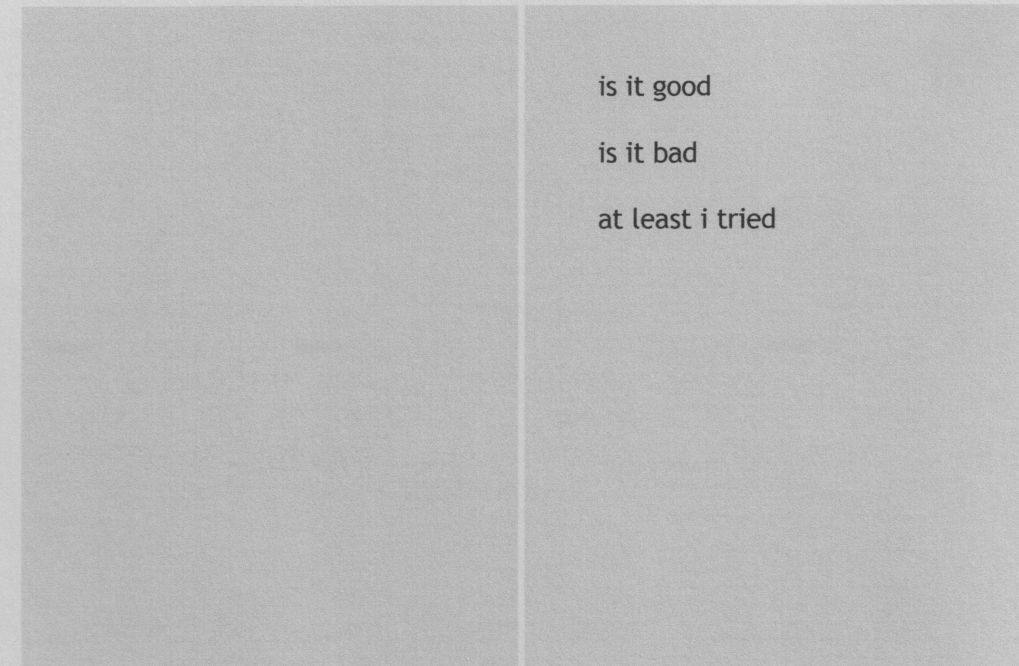
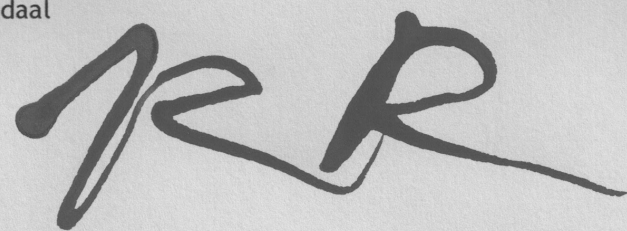
is it bad

at least i tried  
-----

this certification is the signature of the wall painting and must accompany the wall painting if it is sold or otherwise transferred.

first installation: postmasters gallery, new york, 2015

artist: rafaël rozendaal  
title: rr haiku 011  
year: 2013  
size: variable  
edition: unique  
copyright: rafaël rozendaal



choose a wall

paint two equal pink rectangles (slightly apart)

apply text on top of right rectangle

text color = black

font = trebuchet ms

paint color



## Contributors

**kayla anderson** is an interdisciplinary artist, writer, and the Manager of Library Special Collections at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Her writing has been published by Leonardo Journal (MIT Press), the Royal College of Art, and MU Art Space, NL. She is the founding member of a feminist critique group called Media Grrrl, a Hatch Projects artist in residence at the Chicago Artists' Coalition, and a 2015 Visual Arts Fellow for the Luminarts Cultural Foundation.

**haley berkman** is the curatorial assistant at the Menil Collection. She has previously held curatorial positions at various arts organizations including the Museum of Modern Art, the Dallas Museum of Art, and the Pentagram Stiftung. She received her bachelor's with honors in art history from Washington University in St. Louis and her master's in art history from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.

**a. will brown** is a curator and a writer currently working at the Museum of Art, Rhode Island School of Design. He is a founding curator of Monument Lab, a Philadelphia based public art, urban history, and research project. Brown's work includes exhibitions, programs, online projects, and events at the Wattis Institute for Contemporary Arts, Kadist Art Foundation, RISD Museum, The Luggage Store Gallery, Oakland Museum of California, and the Aspen Art Museum.

**margaret carrigan** is an writer and editor who has a penchant for art, architecture, cats, cooking, and ten-minute YouTube videos. She holds a master's in Art History, Theory, and Criticism from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and a bachelor's in English from the University of Illinois. Currently, she lives in Washington, DC where she works at the Smithsonian Scholarly Press.

**marvin jordan** is an editorial assistant and researcher at DIS Magazine and a co-founder of Black Market. His editorial interests range from the political economy of Big Data to the culture of technological unemployment. Black Market is a program highlighting the practices of mostly under-recognized, young artists of color that “focuses on deconstructing and reinventing current themes central to hip hop—such as finance, determination, and celebration—in the context of contemporary art.”

**forrest nash** is the founder and director of Contemporary Art Group, the organization that produces Contemporary Art Daily, Contemporary Art Quarterly, and other projects. He has written a number of texts for books and magazines, and contributed to various curatorial projects.

